INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Please read this before you take part. You must be 18 or older to continue.

KEY INFORMATION

You are invited to take part in a research study titled: Investigating Livestreaming Video Game Playtesting

Researchers:

- Ali Ahsan Muhummad Muzaheed
- Bill A. Hamilton
- Theo Thomas Platt

The person conducting this study is Ali Ahsan Muhummad Muzaheed, supervised by Bill A. Hamilton (Principal Investigator).

WHY ARE YOU BEING ASKED TO PARTICIPATE?

You are being asked to participate because you are an adult (18 or older) who builds games or interactive apps. You will use our streaming tool to share your unfinished work with your own playtesters.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study is to evaluate whether trying someone's unfinished game or app in a web browser, with nothing to install, makes people want to try it and give recorded feedback, and whether that feedback helps student and independent developers improve their work and learn. We are studying the method, not you, and not the quality of your game. This study will take place online, using a free streaming tool you install on your own computer. The outcomes may appear as books, articles, conference presentations, or used in grant writing proposals.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THIS STUDY?

You will be asked to participate in the following procedures:

- You download and install a free, open-source streaming tool (a modified version of Sunshine) on your own computer.
- The tool gives you a link. You decide who to share it with and when to turn it on or off.
- Your playtesters open the link and play your game or app in their web browser. Their keyboard, mouse and controller input is sent to your computer, where the app runs.

- If a playtester agrees, the tool records their browser window and microphone while they give feedback. **These recordings are saved only on your computer.** They are not sent to the research team.
- After using the tool, you complete an online survey on Google Forms (about 15 minutes).
- If you choose, you take part in a follow-up interview over video call (30-45 minutes). It is audio- or video-recorded with your permission so it can be transcribed.

Total expected time commitment: about 15 minutes for the survey, plus as long as you choose to use the tool; 30-45 more minutes if you choose the interview.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARD YOUR PLAYTESTERS

Your playtesters see their own consent page before they play. Please use their recordings only to improve your game or app. Do not post or share them publicly. Delete them when you no longer need them. You may tell us about the feedback you received in the survey or interview, but please do not send us the recordings or your playtesters' names.

DURATION OF PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study will last while you use the tool, until you complete the survey and, if you choose, the interview (see confidentiality below).

BENEFITS AND RISKS

Potential Benefits:

You get free use of a remote playtesting tool and feedback on your work. The study may show whether this is a practical, low-cost way for students and independent developers to test their work with real users, and may make game and app development more accessible to people with limited resources.

Potential Risks:

- The risks are minimal.
- While the tool is running, anyone with your link can play the shared app on your computer. You control the link and can stop it at any time. Share it only with people you choose, and close the tool when you are done.
- The tool streams only the app window you select, never your whole desktop. Your users' keyboard, mouse and controller input reaches your computer. We have added safeguards against harmful input, but a user might find a way around them, so share the link only with people you trust and watch for unusual behavior.
- You are responsible for keeping your playtesters' recordings private.

- Should you feel any emotional distress as a result of participating in the study, below is a list of helpful resources:
    - 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988. Trained crisis workers are available to talk 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Your call is free and confidential.
    - For general information on mental health and to locate treatment services in your area contact the SAMHSA National Helpline at 1-800-662-4357, free and confidential, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

COMPENSATION

There is no compensation for participation in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- We will take careful steps to protect your privacy.
- All research data will be stored securely in a password protected NMSU account accessible only to the researchers, for at least 3 years, then deleted.
- The only personal information we collect is your email address, used to send the survey and schedule the interview. It is stored separately from your answers and deleted when the study ends.
- Each participant gets a code number. Your survey and interview answers are stored under that code, not your name or email. Interview recordings and transcripts are labeled with your code, not your name.
- The software may send the research team a small amount of technical data, used only to keep the software working. Names and IP addresses are not recorded or sent.
- Quotes used in publications will not include your name, your game's name, or other details that could identify you.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION & WITHDRAWAL

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. Withdrawal or refusing to participate will not affect your relationship with New Mexico State University in any way. You may skip any survey or interview question, and you may stop at any time by uninstalling the tool and telling us. If you withdraw, we will delete any survey or interview data linked to your code, unless it has already been made anonymous. If you would like to consent to participation, please choose the first option at the bottom of this page and press Continue. You may save or print this page to keep for your records.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact:

- Person conducting the study: Ali Ahsan Muhummad Muzaheed, Email: muzaheed@nmsu.edu
- Principal Investigator (PI): Bill A. Hamilton, Email: bilhamil@nmsu.edu

If you have concerns about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Office of Research Integrity and Compliance at New Mexico State University: Phone 575-646-7177, Email ric_admin@nmsu.edu.

INFORMED CONSENT

By choosing the first option below, you affirm that:

- You have read and understood this consent form.
- You have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- You voluntarily agree to participate in this study.